

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01796 010953Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
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R 311527Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7395  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON  
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AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BIERUT 1796

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PLO, LE, FR, MOPS  
SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH FRENCH EMBOFF RE UNIFIL

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON MARCH 31, FRENCH DIPLOMAT SAID THE FOLLOWING.
2. NEGOTIATIONS WERE STILL CONTINUING BETWEEN THE COMMANDER OF THE FRENCH UNIFIL UNIT, JEAN SALVAN, AND THE PALESTINIANS OVER CONTROL OF THE QASIMIYAH BRIDGE. THE PALESTINIANS WERE, HOWEVER, UNLIKELY TO AGREE TO TURN OVER THE BRIDGE, SINCE IT WAS VITAL TO THEIR SUPPLY LINES INTO TYRE. THE FRENCH WERE NOT GOING TO USE FORCE TO TAKE THE BRIDGE.
3. AT PRESENT THE PFLP WAS THE COMINANT PALESTINIAL  
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ORGANIZATION IN TYRE. IT WAS UNCLEAR PRECISELY WHICH ORGANIZATION CONTROLLED THE QASIMIYAH BRIDGE.

4. THE PRESENT CEASE-FIRE SEEMED SHAKY AT BEST. FATAH SEEMED TO BE IN "A WAITING PERIOD" AND NOT TO HAVE DECIDED WHETHER TO CONTINUE ATTACKING THE ISRAELIS. THE REJECTIONISTS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY CONTINUE

ATTACKING THE ISRAELIS.

5. FATAH WAS UNLIKELY TO ATTACK UNIFIL AS LONG AS UNIFIL DID NOT TRY TO OCCUPY PALESTINIAN POSITIONS. IF UNIFIL DID TRY TO OCCUPY PALESTINIAN POSITIONS, FATAH WOULD PROBABLY ATTACK.

6. ONE OF THE REJECTIONIST GROUPS, HOWEVER, MIGHT LAUNCH AN UNPROVOKED ATTACK ON A UNIFIL POSITION TO DEMONSTRATE UNIFIL'S FRAGILITY. ONE ENCOURAGING SIGN WAS THAT GEORGES HABBASH HAD TOLD AN AFP CORRESPONDENT IN RELATIVELY RESTRAINED TERMS THAT THE PFLP WOULD NOT BOTHER UNIFIL IF IT DID NOT "DEVIATE FROM ITS MISSION." GIVEN ALL THE RISKS, HOWEVER, THE LIKELIHOOD OF SOME ARMED CLASHES BETWEEN UNIFIL AND THE PALESTINIANS WAS HIGH.

7. THE FRENCH CONTINGENT WAS SUPPOSED TO RESPOND TO ANY POSSIBLE ATTACKS "AS POLICE NOT SOLDIERS" AND TO USE A MINIMUM OF VIOLENCE. THE FRENCH EMBASSY, HOWEVER, RECOGNIZED THAT THE CONTINGENT WAS A MILITARY UNIT AND FEARED THAT PRIDE MIGHT LEAD THE CONTINGENT TO RESPOND TO ATTACKS WITH UNNECESSARY VIGOR.

8. THE FRENCH WERE UNLIKELY TO WITHDRAW THEIR CONTINGENT FROM UNIFIL EVEN IF THEY TOOK MORE  
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CASUALTIES. WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT POLITICALLY FOR THE GOF. IT WOULD PROBABLY OCCUR ONLY UPON COMPLETE DISSOLUTION OF UNIFIL OR SOME MAJOR TRAGEDY INVOLVING THE FRENCH CONTINGENT.

9. THE PRESENCE OF THE FRENCH UNIFIL CONTINGENT HAD CAUSED SERIOUS POLITICAL PROBLEMS FOR THE FRENCH HERE. SOME MARONITES WERE RUNNING AROUND SAYING THE FRENCH HAD COME TO PROTECT CHRISTIAN INTERESTS. LEBANESE LEFTISTS WERE ACCUSING THE FRENCH OF BIAS. THE FRENCH COMMANDER JEAN SALVAN, FOR EXAMPLE, HAD TOLD THE PRESS THAT QASIMIYAH BRIDGE WAS NOT WORTH ONE DROP OF FRENCH BLOOD. THE LEFTIST DAILY AS-SAFIR HAD REPORTED SALVAN AS SAYING THE FRENCH WOULD MAKE SOMEONE "PAY" FOR EVERY DROP OF FRENCH BLOOD.

10. COMMENT: FRENCH DIPLOMAT LEFT NO DOUBT THAT HIS EMBASSY WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR MAINTAINING THE CURRENT CEASE-FIRE AND OF UNIFIL BEING ABLE TO DISCHARGE ITS MANDATE UNDER UNSC RESOLUTION 425.  
PARKER

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** INFORMATION EXCHANGE, PALESTINIANS, NEGOTIATIONS, INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCES, MILITARY PLANS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**TAGS:** MOPS, LE, FR, PLO, UNSC, UNIFIL  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014